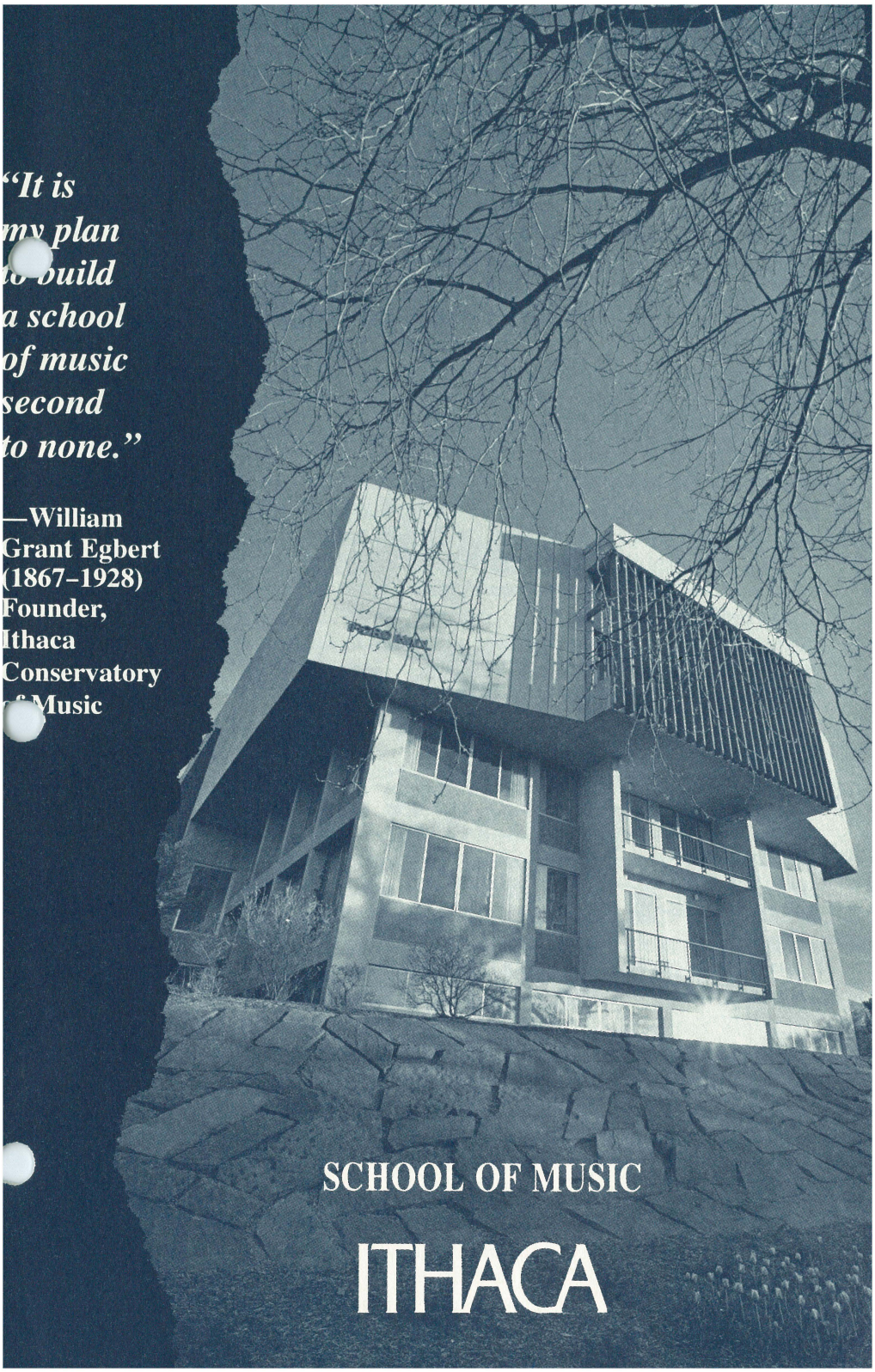
9-26-2000

Concert: Janos Starker, violoncello

Janos Starker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—William Grant Egbert (1867–1928) Founder, Ithaca Conservatory of Music
SCHOOL OF MUSIC
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ITHACA COLLEGE CONCERTS 2000-2001

Janos Starker, violoncello
Shigeo Neriki, piano

Sonata in F for Violoncello and Piano, op. 6 (1883) — Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

Allegro con brio
Andante ma non troppo
Finale: Allegro vivo

INTERMISSION

Sonata in C for Piano and Violoncello, op. 102, no. 1 (1815) — Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Andante: Allegro vivace
Adagio: Tempo d'andante: Allegro vivace

Sonata in e for Piano with Violoncello, op. 38 (1862-65) — Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Allegro non troppo
Allegretto quasi Menuetto
Allegro

Ford Hall
Tuesday, September 26, 2000
8:15 p.m.

THE ARTISTS

Ithaca College is pleased to present **Janos Starker,** universally acknowledged to be one of the great virtuoso cellists of our time as well as a performing artist and teacher of worldwide influence. Mr. Starker, with his peerless technical mastery, intensely expressive playing, great communicative power, and musical intelligence, is globally recognized as one of the supreme musicians of our day.

Last season his United States engagements included performances with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra, among others, of the cello concerti of Elgar, Haydn, and Saint-Saëns. He revisited the 92nd Street Y, where he is a perennial favorite and where in past seasons he has performed the complete works for cello and piano by Beethoven and the Bach suites. And he was feted in a special gala birthday celebration concert at Indiana University's Musical Arts Center with numerous distinguished artists in attendance and performance. That concert marked the first time that world-famous musicians Janos Starker and Mstislav Rostropovich (conducting the Indiana University Philharmonic Orchestra and soloists) performed together. Abroad, Mr. Starker toured Japan, (including recitals at Tokyo's Casal Hall and concerts with the NHK Symphony Orchestra), Spain, and France.

Mr. Starker has amassed a recording catalog of more that 165 works on various international labels and has garnered several awards as a result. His two-CD set of the complete Bach suites garnered him a 1998 Grammy Award for best instrumental soloist performance. His releases on BMG's RCA Victor Red Seal label have included his first recording of the cello version of the Bartok viola concerto plus the Dvorak concerto and Richard Strauss's *Don Quixote*. Recent recordings include the Hindemith/Schumann concerti, Elgar and Walton concerti, and the aforementioned Bach unaccompanied suites. Mr. Starker's interpretations of sonatas for cello and piano of Brahms, Debussy, Martinu (nominated for a 1993 Grammy Award), and Rachmaninoff, plus Schumann's *Adagio and Allegro* , opus 70, and *Fantasiestucke*, opus 88, have also been released by BMG. Additional recent issues have come from Delos and CRI, and Mercury and EMI have issued rereleases. Mr. Starker has recorded for Angel, Deutsche Grammophon, Everest, Laurel, London, Louisville, Mercury, Philips, Seraphim, Star, and other labels worldwide.

Mr. Starker began his study of the cello in his native Budapest at the age of 6; at age 8 was teaching his first pupil; and at 11 he was

performing in public. His early career followed a maturing process that took him through study at Budapest's Franz Liszt Academy of Music and to the positions of first cellist with the Budapest Opera and Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra. In 1948 he emigrated from Hungary to the United States, where he subsequently held the post of principal cellist with, in turn, the Dallas Symphony, the Metropolitan Opera, and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Fritz Reiner. In 1958 he joined the faculty of the School of Music at Indiana University, Bloomington. In the same year, Mr. Starker resumed his international solo career.

When not touring or recording, Janos Starker holds the title of distinguished professor at Indiana University, where for 40 years his classes have attracted string players from around the world. He was the first recipient of the Tracy M. Sonneborn Award, an honor given by the university to a faculty member who has achieved distinction as both teacher and artist.

Shigeo Neriki has been touring with Janos Starker since 1976. The two have collaborated extensively in concerts throughout North and South America, Europe, and Asia. Last year they successfully completed tours of Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and mainland China. The duo has recorded for Dennon, Delos and RCA Red Seal recording labels. Its Delos recording of Popper pieces was nominated for a Grammy Award.

As a soloist Mr. Neriki has performed with many orchestras in the United States including the Boston, Chicago, and Pittsburgh Symphonies, and the National Symphony (Washington, D.C.). He has played extensively in his native Japan as well as in Europe and Mexico. As an active chamber musician Mr. Neriki has displayed his command of the repertoire in many chamber music series around the world, including the St. Cere Music festival in France, the Festival der Zukunft in Switzerland, the Chamber Music Society of Holland, the Seattle Chamber Music Festival, Bargemusic in New York, and several festivals in Japan. In 1991 he formed his own performance group, which he calls Tokyo Soloists--which has been dubbed by one critic "a miraculous ensemble." In 1992 the Emperor of Japan and his family specifically asked Tokyo Soloists to perform at the royal palace for a private concert.

Born in Tokyo, Shigeo Neriki started playing piano at age three. At fifteen, he won a national piano competition sponsored by the Tokyo Broadcasting System and received a special award by the minister of culture. After graduating with honors from the Toho Gakuen High School of Music, he entered Indiana University in 1971. There he

studied with distinguished professor of piano Gyorgy Sebok. Among the awards he has received are the 1993 Suntory Music Award (equivalent to an Avery Fisher Career Grant) for his contribution to Japanese society and prizes at the 1974 International Tchaikovsky Competition.

Mr. Neriki is currently professor of music at Indiana University in Bloomington and guest professor at two Japanese universities, at which he regularly gives master classes: Toho Gakuen School of Music in Tokyo and Soai University in Osaka.

PROGRAM NOTES

Richard Strauss (1864–1949). Sonata in F for Violoncello and Piano, op. 6

The musical talent of Richard Strauss, the first-born of Franz Joseph Strauss, the principal horn in the Munich Court Orchestra, and Josephine Pschorr, a member of the wealthy family of brewers, showed itself at an early age, and he started composing when he was six years old. When he was eleven, he received training in music theory and instrumentation from one of the court conductors, Friedrich Meyer. Strauss entered Munich University in 1882 to read philosophy, aesthetics, and the history of art, but left in 1883 to concentrate on music. While at the university, he composed his Concerto in d for Violin, op. 8, which he performed on 5 December 1882 in Bösendorfsaal in Vienna; the critic Eduard Hanslick noted "unusual talent." The years 1881–85 were very productive for Strauss. He wrote Sonata in F for Violoncello (op. 6), Serenade in E♭ for 13 Winds (op. 7), *Stimmungsbilder* for piano (op. 9), *Acht Lieder aus Letzte Blätter* for voice (op. 10), Concerto No. 1 in E♭ for Horn (op. 11), Symphony No. 2 in f (op. 12), Piano Quartet in f (op. 13), and *Wandrers Sturmlied* for chorus and orchestra (op. 14). On 4 March 1885, his Symphony No. 2 was premiered in New York City by the Philharmonic Society Orchestra.

The cello sonata (1880–83) is dedicated to and was written for Hans Wihan (1855–1920). Wihan, who became professor of cello at the Prague Conservatory in 1888, premiered the sonata on 12 August 1883 in Nuremberg. The Allegro con brio opens with an harmonic theme that is followed by a lyrical one. Strauss wrote home to his parents that Joseph Joachim had congratulated him for the opening lyrical theme. The first theme of the secondary theme group begins in the dominant minor (c) and rises to another dynamic apex before the introduction of another secondary theme, *grazioso*, in the parallel major (C). The development, dominated by sequences, concludes with a fugato on the opening theme. The recapitulation closes with a coda.

The lyrical and melancholy Andante ma non troppo, cast in ternary form in the relative minor (d), exploits the middle and lower register of the cello. Beginning like one of Mendelssohn's *Songs Without Words,* it has a middle section that reveals the influence of Robert Schumann on the young composer. The Allegro vivo, in single-movement sonata form, has a secondary theme that is strikingly similar to one from Mendelssohn's Trio in c, op. 66. Strauss is barely into the development section when he pays homage to Wagner with cadence patterns from Act II of *Parsifal.* The development section, like that of the first movement, relies heavily on sequences. The pinnacle of the development is followed by an unnecessarily lengthy retransition to the recapitulation. The excitement of the secondary theme slowly unwinds and the sonata abruptly ends on two fortissimo chords. This early work reveals the genius of the mature Strauss. We can only regret that Strauss did not, unlike Beethoven or Brahms, return to the duo sonata for violoncello and piano later in his creative life.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827). Sonata in C for Piano and Violoncello, op. 102 no. 1

The emancipation of the violoncello from its role as a continuo instrument began about 1770, when the virtuoso French cellist Jean-Louis DuPort (1749–1819) established the basic principles of fingering and bowing technique for it. In 1796 Beethoven wrote the earliest major works of the classical-romantic repertoire for piano and violoncello (op. 5) for DuPort. Beethoven added three more duo sonatas for piano and violoncello: op. 69 in 1808, and, seven years later, the two sonatas of op. 102. The latter two sonatas are dedicated to Countess Marie von Erdödy, an amateur pianist who was one of Beethoven's oldest, most devoted, and musical friends. In December 1814, the palace of Count Razumovsky (1752–1836) in Vienna was gutted by fire and not rebuilt, suspending the string quartet concerts regularly held there. When the countess moved to Croatia in 1815, the cellist in the Razumovsky quartet, Joseph Linke (1783–1837), joined her household. The op. 102 sonatas were a going away gift for Linke.

Dated "towards the end of July [1815]," op. 102 no. 1 is described on the manuscript as a "free sonata." This two-movement sonata shows itself to be structurally related to the Sonata for Piano in A, op. 101, which dates from the same time. The lyrical conjunct theme of the opening Andante is spun out softly between the two instruments. The primary theme of the *attacca* Allegro vivace in a minor, which bursts forth in octaves in the cello and piano, is an inversion of the opening Andante theme. A short development begins with the primary theme in C major, and the recapitulation closes with a short coda. A varied return of the Andante, following the rhapsodic C major Adagio, binds the two movements together thematically. The development section of the Allegro vivace, introduced by silence followed by a perfect fifth in the cello, is permeated with imitative and chromatic third-related passages. The coda, which explores the key area of the Neapolitan (D♭), begins as the development did: with silence and then a perfect fifth in the cello. In the op. 102 sonatas, as Martin Cooper observes, Beethoven's conception of sonata form moves away "from the dramatic principle of contrast with its implicit idea of struggle. In its place we find a unified vision where music borrows nothing from the theatre . . . and aspires to its own unique condition." With the completion of the op. 102 sonatas in 1815, Beethoven abandoned the duo sonata genre, as he had the concerto in 1809, and the piano trio in 1811.

Johannes Brahms. Sonata in e for Piano with Violoncello, op. 38

In summer 1862, Brahms worked on his *Magelone Lieder*, string quintet, c minor symphony, and he composed three movements—Allegro non troppo, Allegretto quasi Menuetto, and Adagio—of his first duo sonata. When Brahms added the last movement (Allegro) to his duo sonata for violoncello and piano in June 1865, he dropped the Adagio. Accepted for publication by Simrock in October 1865 and published in 1866, the sonata is dedicated to

Dr. Josef Günsbacher, an amateur cellist. Günsbacher, a voice teacher at the Conservatory in Vienna, was instrumental in securing Brahms his appointment to the Singakademie in 1863.

The Allegro non troppo, cast in single-movement sonata form, opens with a neighbor note figure (B-C-B) and a rhythmic motive of a dotted quarter, eighth, and half note. A transition theme in C leads to the lyrical secondary theme in the dominant minor (b); the secondary theme continues to exploit the dotted rhythm of the primary theme. A homorhythmic closing theme in the dominant major above a double pedal point brings the exposition to a close. The development, with its distantly-related keys of F and B, treats each theme in order. The drama of the movement is encapsulated in the sudden appearance of the third-related chords that support the neighbor note motive at the beginning of the coda.

The opening four notes of the Allegretto quasi Menuetto, a compound ternary form in the subdominant minor (a), serve as the motive for the f♯ minor trio. The concluding Allegro is a fugue within the formal structure of the single-movement sonata form, with its clear exposition and recapitulation. The primary theme is a three-voice fugato with a countersubject; the nonimitative secondary theme, drawn from the countersubject, provides textural contrast. The fugal sections make use of inversion, stretti, and imitative episodes. In the recapitulation, Brahms reverses the presentation order of the themes.

Karl Geiringer has written,

> The whole work is in a certain sense an act of homage to the venerated J. S. Bach, for the main theme of the first movement is closely related to the 'Contrapunctus 3' from Bach's *Art of the Fugue,* while the fugato theme in the Finale of Brahms is astonishingly like the 'Contrapunctus 13' from the same work. . . .This Sonata is a genuinely Brahmsian composition, in which romantic feeling and severe construction are perfectly balanced.

Twenty years would lapse before Brahms wrote another duo sonata for piano and violoncello, op. 99 in F.

Mary I. Arlin